

NIMH CONSTITUENCY OUTREACH & EDUCATION PROGRAM

BIPOLAR DISORDER SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

Updated February 8, 2001

Information Dissemination Tip Sheet

Bipolar disorder, also called manic-depressive illness, is a serious disorder of the brain. More than 2.3 million American adults, or about 1 percent of the population in a given year, have bipolar disorder. Although rare in young children, bipolar disorder can appear in both children and adolescents. Abnormalities in brain biochemistry and in the structure and/or activity of certain brain circuits are responsible for the extreme shifts in mood, energy, and functioning that characterize bipolar disorder. Fortunately, the intense and disabling symptoms of bipolar disorder often can be relieved through treatment involving combinations of medications and psychotherapy. NIMH is conducting a large multi-site clinical trial of bipolar disorder, called STEP-BD, which will advance knowledge how best to treat individuals with bipolar disorder.

Ideas for Promoting Science-Based Information on Bipolar Disorder

Some practical ways to share information and adapt science-based material on bipolar disorder, to meet the needs of various groups in your State, might include the following actions:

For Mental Health and Medical Professionals

- Reproduce selected materials listed on the annotated bibliography (see below) and use them as handouts for consumers at local mental health and primary care offices.
- Network with your State's Community Mental Health Centers, providing them with information from the annotated bibliography.

For Your Community

- Use the material as supplemental background information for mental health professionals involved in Mental Illness Awareness Week and National Depression Screening Day.
- Post the information on your organization's Web site and highlight a link to the NIMH site at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>.
- Share information on bipolar disorder with your coalition members via e-mail or in a coalition newsletter. Please see <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolarmenu.cfm> for additional materials and new postings.
- Reproduce some of the material listed on the annotated bibliography to disseminate at health fairs and to hospitals, clinics, HMOs, or pharmacies.
- Promote your scientific advisor or other expert in bipolar disorder as a spokesperson on the topic to civic organizations; at such presentations, use NIMH materials as handouts.
- Work with libraries in your State to disseminate science-based information on bipolar disorder via bulletin boards and/or handouts.
- Make handouts on bipolar disorder available to associations of clergy, pastoral counselors, and faith-based organizations.

For the Media

- Provide information to reporters and/or TV and radio producers as background; volunteer to arrange an interview with your scientific advisor and a mental health consumer. Make sure spokespersons mention telephone numbers where readers/listeners can get more information.
- Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper in your State with the largest circulation about the impact of bipolar disorder and the importance of research in advancing knowledge about bipolar disorder. Provide information on how consumers can obtain more information through the NIMH Web site as well as your own Web site or toll-free number.

Annotated Bibliography: Publications on Line

- Bipolar Disorder Research at the National Institute of Mental Health
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolar.cfm>
This booklet answers many common questions about bipolar disorder. Current research-based information is provided for people with bipolar disorder, their family members and friends, and the general public about the symptoms and diagnosis of bipolar disorder, possible causes, treatments, clinical studies, and information resources. A tear-out bookmark features suggestions for reducing symptoms, avoiding relapse, and improving quality of life.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolarresfact.cfm>
This fact sheet provides detailed, research-based information about bipolar disorder in adults and youth. Topics include the diagnosis of bipolar disorder; what studies are revealing about potential causes and correlates of the illness; current treatments and treatment research; and co-occurring disorders.
- Medications <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/medicate.cfm>
This booklet is designed to help persons who use mental health services to be well informed about medications for mental disorders. It offers descriptions of mental disorders and the medications prescribed for them and contains an alphabetical listing of medications. *NOTE: Several new medications for mental disorders have become available since the last printing of this booklet. Inserts that include these medications are available.*
- Depression in Children and Adolescents: A Fact Sheet for Physicians
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depchildresfact.cfm>
This detailed fact sheet provides information for physicians on the diagnosis and treatment of depressive disorders in youth.
- Co-occurrence of Depression <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/abuse.cfm>
This fact sheet provides information about the co-occurrence of depression with various other illnesses such as heart disease, substance abuse, and other mental disorders.

Additional Web Resources

- NIMH Bipolar Disorder Web page <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolarmenu.cfm>
Lists links to NIMH materials on bipolar disorder, clinical trials information, scientific conference and workshop summaries, and other resources.
- NIMH Clinical Trials Web page <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/studies/index.cfm>
Provides links to information on clinical trials sponsored by NIMH as well as general information for research volunteers.

- National Library of Medicine's Clinical Trials Database <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>
A new database of clinical studies sponsored primarily by the National Institutes of Health. During the coming year, additional studies from other Federal agencies and the pharmaceutical industry will be included.
- Harvard Bipolar Research Program <http://www.manicdepressive.org>
Provides information on clinical care and research for people living with bipolar disorder.
- Systematic Treatment Enhancement Program for Bipolar Disorder (STEP-BD) Web page <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/studies/stepbd.cfm>
Provides information about STEP-BD, a new treatment effectiveness research study of bipolar disorder sponsored by NIMH.

Organizations with Information on Bipolar Disorder

National Institute of Mental Health, NIH
Office of Communications and Public Liaison
6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 8184, MSC 9663
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663
Tel: (301) 443-4513
TTY: (301) 443-8431
Fax: (301) 443-4279
Internet: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

National Depressive and Manic Depressive
Association
730 North Franklin, Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-7204
Tel: (312) 642-0049
Toll Free: (800) 826-3632
Fax: (312) 642-7243
Internet: <http://www.ndmda.org>

National Foundation for Depressive Illness
P.O. Box 2257
New York, NY 10116
Toll Free: (800) 239-1265

American Academy of Child and Adolescent
Psychiatry
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016-3007
Tel: (202) 966-7300
Fax: (202) 966-2891
Internet: <http://www.aacap.org>

American Psychiatric Association
1400 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (888) 357-7924
Fax: (202) 682-6850
Internet: <http://www.psych.org>

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
Toll Free: (800) 950-NAMI
Fax: (703) 516-7238
Internet: <http://www.nami.org>

National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971
(703) 684-7722
Toll Free: (800) 969-NMHA
Fax: (703) 684-5968
Internet: <http://www.nmha.org>

Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation
Ruth Field, President
1187 Wilmette Avenue
P.M.B. #331
Wilmette, IL 60091
Fax: (847) 920-9498
Internet: <http://www.bpkids.org>